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**THE IMPACT OF PROLIFERATION OF SMALL ARMS ON HUMAN SECURITY IN
AMHARA REGIONAL STATE, ETHIOPIA: THE CASE OF GONDAR CITY**

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List of Acronyms

AAA	Amhara Association of America
ANRS	Amhara National Regional State
ANRSPS	Amhara National Regional State Peace and Security
ATT	Arms Trade Treaty
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CHS	Commission on Human Security
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization, Reintegration
EFP	Ethiopian Federal Police
ENDF	Ethiopian National Defense Force
EU	European Union
HDP	Human Development Report
HIS	Human Security Index
HS	Human Security
HSN	Human Security Network
ISS	Institute for Security Studies
KII	Key Informant Interview
PCS	People-centered Security
SALW	Small arms and light weapons
TPLF	Tigray People Liberation Front
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
VIN	Vehicle Identification Number

Abstract

This research examines the impacts of small arms proliferation on human security in Gondar City, Amhara Regional State, Ethiopia. The researcher employs a qualitative research methodology, incorporating both primary and secondary data sources. The researcher conducted interviews with government officials and city residents. The study's findings indicate that small arms significantly contribute to human insecurity, leading to higher mortality rates, forced displacements, and economic crises. Factors including political instability, ineffective governance, the dissolution of the Amhara Special Force, illicit arms trafficking, the city's geographical proximity to Sudan and Eritrea, and a prevailing culture of small arms drive the common presence of small arms in the city. Kidnapping, murder, and robbery incidents have significantly increased, indicating an escalation of armed conflicts and criminal activities, particularly after the 2020 Northern Ethiopia conflict. Political instability, the existence of weak and corrupt security structure have exacerbated the situation. The effects on the economy and society include business closures, fear which have disrupted daily life and eroded public safety. In spite of Ethiopia's ratification of international conventions on arms control, poor law enforcement and weak legislation have allowed illegal arms to proliferate in the city.

Keywords: *Proliferation, small arms, impact, human Security, and Gondar City*

Chapter One: Introduction

This study examines the impacts of small arms proliferation on human security in Gondar City, Ethiopia, Amhara Regional State. The paper focuses on security challenges that stem from the proliferation of small arms. This study focused on how small arms can lead to violent crimes including robbery, kidnapping, and murder in the city. Additionally, analysis is conducted on the human cost of small arms, the factors contributing to their proliferation, and the legal and institutional frameworks concerning their management mechanism in Ethiopia.

1.1. Background and Justification of the Research

According to Pattugalan (2004), human security involves safeguarding individuals from various forms of harm, including both physical violence and nonviolent dangers. This task requires implementing proactive measures to decrease vulnerability and mitigate risk, as well as implementing corrective measures when prevention is unsuccessful. The 1994 Global Human Development report, focused on human security, aimed to reduce military expenditure, provide peace dividends, and alleviate insecurity to foster human development (Ray et al., 2006). Human security strives to detect, minimize, and reduce risks to human well-being, including pervasive insecurity caused by armed conflict, human rights abuses, and underdevelopment (Tadjbakhsh, 2005). Human security is a multifaceted matter that includes both physical threats and the absence of fear.

Ensuring human safety requires certain prerequisites, such as development, security sector reform, human rights training, physical protection, weapons collecting programs, and disarmament (Banerjee et al., 2002). Security threats today stem from both within states and between states. It's now broader, focusing on population wellbeing, equitable development, and inter-group relations. Human security, developed in response to complex emergencies, focuses on individual freedom from fear and want, shifting the focus away from the state (Large et al., 2006). Small arms represent a direct threat to human security and understanding how, where and what these risks are, is fundamental to ensuring appropriate intervention (Banerjee et al., 2002).

The 1994 UNDP report presents a fresh perspective on security, emphasizing the importance of prioritizing people over territories and development over arms. It thoroughly analyzes the national and global issues surrounding human security (UNDP, 1994). According to Pattugalan (2004), in Southeast Asia, arms-fueled insecurity deters business ventures and job openings, prolongs political unrest and poverty, weakens civilian protection, and jeopardizes sustainable development. Likewise, over the last several decades, Latin America has seen a significant influx of substantial amounts of small guns and light weapons, which has contributed to a severe outbreak of political and criminal violence (Mogire, 2004).

Small arms, costing \$140-170 billion annually, cause daily deaths and illegal trafficking, predominantly in Latin America, posing a major threat to peace and security (Upreti, 2010). Social conflict and violent crime, caused by failed systems, degrade personal security, modify community conduct, raise the wealth-poor discrepancy, and constrain political tolerance, all of which have an impact on social and national development (Louise, 1995). Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALWs) result in 500,000 fatalities each year, playing a significant role in 90% of conflicts and serving as trade instruments for terrorists, rebels, and criminals (Bourne, 2005). Small Arms and light weapons (SALW) are a growing concern in terms of proliferation. However, SALW have always played a significant role in civil wars, armed crime, government repression, violations of human rights, and massacres (Bourne, 2005).

The persistence and the complication of wars in Africa are partially due to small arms proliferation (Tar et al., 2021). Today's security concerns come from inside nations as well as between states, and they are mostly caused by economic hardship, social exclusion, and deeply rooted social structures (Large et al., 2006). The proliferation, availability, and uncontrolled use of SALW contributed to insecurity in regions, prolonged conflicts, sparked new conflicts, increased conflict severity, worsened displacement of families and communities, devalued and disrespected life, promoted a violent culture, hindered relief and humanitarian work, and led to state collapse (Yankey, 2005).

Horn of Africa is one of the continent's most conflict-ridden areas. Indeed, it is described as an extension of the Middle East hotspot given the region's tendency for the taking form and escalation of violence typified by rebel activities, military coups, ethnic and racial insurgencies, human rights abuses, and state collapse (Kassaw, 2009). In the Horn of Africa, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons has had and continues to have catastrophic effects (Nganga, 2008).

The illicit spread of light weapons and small arms (SALW) throughout Africa threatens development, undermines security, and destabilizes societies all of which lead to an increase in the number of conflicts on the continent(Union, 2014).

Small arms availability continues to fuel and to prolong conflicts in Africa, as well as to contribute to increased criminal activity. Humanitarian catastrophes are ever more frequent. Arms proliferation still poses a great threat to regions suffering latent conflict (Yankey, 2005:6).

According to Birhan (2016), widespread presence of small arms and light weapons poses a significant threat to the security and development of communities worldwide, regardless of whether they are in times of peace or conflict. For Banerjee et al., (2002), the main danger to governments and their people is tiny guns and light weapons, which generate global instability, destruction, international wars, and law and order issues. Africa faces significant challenges in regulating conflicts due to the proliferation, circulation, and use of illegal weapons, largely due to lax institutions, porous borders, and corruption. The ineffectiveness of arms control measures makes it difficult to predict the size and proportion of conflicts. Illicit SALW trafficking fuels crime, conflict, and terrorist activities, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa (Guta et al., 2024).

Ethiopia is found in Horn of Africa and, small arms have been used to kill thousands of people in conflict situations, and criminal activities (Aemro, 2017). According to Nega, (2021), Small arms and their misuse is not only threatening people's security but also affecting their livelihood and day-to-day activities. Small arms and light weapons drive civil wars, organized crime, insurgency, and terrorism worldwide. This caused severe violence and deaths throughout Africa, particularly in the Horn of Africa and Great Lakes regions. Ethiopia, a major affected country, has high access to these weapons despite arms control restrictions. Illegally owned small weapons have killed over 1,000 individuals in Amhara, underscoring the necessity for effective supervision.

Mercy Fekadu (2017), conducted research on “small arms and conflict among East African pastoralists” the study explores the relationship between small arms and conflict among East African pastoralists, specifically the Nyangatom people in south-western Ethiopia. The study uses the Karamoja security complex to analyze data and proposes a Karamoja security complex, which is known for its state-level conflicts.

While Aemro (2017:8), conducted a study on the factors for misuse of small arms and its impact in the Eastern Gojjam Zone of Amhara Regional State and revealed that the magnitude or number of small arms possessed and circulated in East Gojjam Zone was high. The findings shows that the reasons behind the misuse of small arms are, a significant human security and development challenge. The major reasons for misuses of small arms are: cultural (pride, revenge and emotional music and poetry), easy availability of small arms, alcohol and lack of skills to manage guns. He also highlights the lack of regulation and the need for adoption, sensitization, law implementation, and continuous awareness raising to change attitudes towards small arms and harmful cultures. Yet Aemro does not delve into the specific impacts on human security.

Nega (2021), also conducted research on this issue: his thesis is entitled “Small Arms Proliferation and Its Impact on Human Security and Sustainable Peace: The Case of Fogera Woreda, Woreta City Administration”. The findings show that several factors contributed to the increase in arms proliferation, including sociocultural influences, the security dilemma, regional and national dynamics, inadequate regulations regarding small arms, and the inability of security forces to effectively combat arms traffickers. Guta et al., (2024) examined the phenomenon of illicit small arms trafficking within specific regions of Ethiopia, elucidating the underlying factors and principal stakeholders involved. Nevertheless, the analysis fails to provide a thorough exploration of the implications for human security. This highlights a deficiency in comprehending the ways in which the dynamics of illicit arms trade distinctly influence community safety and stability within this urban environment. Cochrane et al., (2024), investigated the reasons that drive farmers in rural Ethiopia to acquire firearms, connecting this behavior to the prevailing issues of insecurity and uncertainty.

A variety of criminal activities associated with small arms, including murder and kidnapping, affect Gondar city every year. However, the aforementioned studies do not address the effect of small arms on human security, particularly in cases of murder and kidnapping. The lack of urban-concentrated research limits our understanding of how small arms proliferation influences human security in densely populated areas, where the consequences of armed violence are often more immediate and severe. This indicates the need for localized research to understand how small arms proliferation specifically affects human security in urban settings like Gondar, where the interplay of urban crime significantly differs from rural areas in Ethiopia.

1.2. Research Objectives and Question

1.2.1. General Objective

The general objective of this study is therefore to examine the impact of small arms on human security in Amhara Regional State, Ethiopia: The Case of Gondar City.

1.2.2. Specific Objectives

- To examine the human cost of small arms in the urban setting
- To examine the contributing factors for the proliferation of small arms in the study area
- To scrutinize mechanisms to manage the proliferation of small arms

1.2.3. Research Questions

- How does the proliferation of small arms affect human security in terms of organized crimes?
- What factors are contributing to the proliferation of small arms in the study area?
- What mechanisms can be implemented to alleviate the proliferation of small arms?

1.3. Research Methodology

This section of the research examines the structured steps of the research method, particularly the research approach, design, data collection techniques, sampling methods, and analytical procedures.

1.3.1. Research Approach

This study used a qualitative research approach. Qualitative approach is an important approach to deal with complex social realities, to establish the meaning of the phenomenon, to explore individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem, and for depth understanding of the context (Creswell, 2004). For Kothari (2004), qualitative research, including motivation research, uses in-depth interviews and various techniques to study human behavior and uncover underlying motives and desires. In accordance with this, the researcher utilized a qualitative methodology to investigate the effects of small arms proliferation, the underlying factors, and the effectiveness of law enforcement in the Amhara region of Ethiopia, with a specific focus on Gondar city. Given the implications of small arms proliferation on human security, the researcher opted for a qualitative study approach to investigate and delve into various data sources.

Qualitative research provides opportunities to locate the genesis of a phenomenon, explore possible reasons for its occurrence, codify what the experience of the phenomenon meant to those involved, and determine if the experience created a theoretical frame or conceptual understanding associated with the phenomenon (Michael et al.,2019:1).

1.3.2. Description of the Study Area

Gondar, situated in the Northwest region of Ethiopia, serves as a significant center for tourism and business, with a recorded population of 443,156. The city comprises six administrative sub-cities and boasts a significant historical background, highlighted by the Atsie Fasil Ghimb castle compound. Gondar achieved recognition as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1979, highlighting its significance in the political and religious history of the country (Mekonen, et al., 2023).

Gondar is one of the oldest urban settlement in Africa, the city of Gondar, located 738km north west of Addis Ababa, its altitude is 2300 meters above sea level, and a medieval royal city which was ascribed by UNESCO as the " World Heritage Site" founded by emperor Fasiladas in 1636, the city of Gondar had been the seat of the Ethiopian state for about 250 years (Moareta, 2015:23).

Gondar serves as a hub for political and economic endeavors. This location serves as a significant center for both tourism and commerce, featuring notable sites such as the Fasiledes Castles and Semen National Park. One of Gondar's most important economic activities is trade. The city's thriving commerce are mostly attributable to the surrounding areas of Metema and Humera, which are known for their sesame and cotton production (Tegegne et al., 2020). According to Belay (2022), the city of Gondar is also the leading tourist destination in Ethiopia with a variety of natural and cultural attractions. Such as, Fasile castle, Fasile bath, Kusekum church and museum, Debere Berhanselasie monastery Felasha village, and around Gondar Semine mountain national park etc. are best tourist attraction in Gondar.

This study is geographically limited to Gondar city due to specific considerations. At present, Gondar functions as a buffer zone, characterized by extensive borders with Sudan to the west and Eritrea to the north. The regions in question function as a pathway for the trafficking and smuggling of small arms, originating from Sudan and passing through Gondar to reach the Amhara region. The

current conflict in neighboring Sudan creates conditions conducive to the dissemination of small arms in the surrounding area, thereby adversely affecting the human safety of the population.

1.3.3. Sources of Data Collection

The researcher utilized a combination of primary and secondary sources. Primary data sources offer first-hand information (Kothari, 2004). This study utilizes primary sources to obtain original information regarding the impacts of small arms proliferation and associated human security threats, gathered by the researcher through phone and face-to-face interviews with respondents.

1.3.4. Data Collection Tools or Instruments

The primary information as collected through interview as the main methods of data collection. This method was used to collect the necessary information from government offices, particularly from Gondar City police department bureau and the community in the city.

Key Informant Interview: The primary information was collected through key informant interviews (KII). Bernard (2011) asserts that in-depth interviews allow the researcher to delve deeply into a specific topic, gathering all necessary details from study participants. The researcher used key informant interviews to understand the views of experts on the study issue. According to Creswell (2004), key informant interviews are useful in obtaining experts with specific knowledge and understanding who can offer valuable insights into the nature of problems. According to Chib & Chen (2011), researchers have utilized in-depth interviews to understand the lived experiences of individuals. In this regard, the researcher used purposive sampling, and the researcher conducted an in-depth interview with government officials and residents in the city.

According to Kothari (2004), purposive or non-probability sampling can be very useful in situations where one needs to reach a targeted sample quickly and select certain units of sample that reflect the whole. The researcher conducted two key informant interviews with the Gondar City Police Department Bureau and selected people from the community in the city. Based on the appropriateness and preference of the respondents, the researcher conducted the interviews were carried out in telephone and face-to-face modalities. Prior to conducting interviews, the researcher got permission from informants involved in the interviews. Before conducting interviews, the researcher told the purpose of the research to the participants, and their reactions significantly influenced the study.

Secondary Sources: - Secondary sources of data were collected from a wide range of materials through document review, including published and unpublished sources. These include books, articles, magazines, academic and research papers, official reports, publications, government policy documents, federal and regional State documents, press reports, periodic and statistical reports.

1.4. Limitation of the Study

A single study cannot resolve this issue. This study is very specific. For example, while a detailed inquiry is essential, this study should also include the relatives of the hostages who were victims of the attack and the affected members of society, as they contribute valuable information. Unfortunately, due to security concerns, the researcher was unable to involve the victims and their families in this study. As a result, the study should include the victim families' viewpoints and activities in relation to human rights. Higher education and research institutes are required to perform additional research on the subject.

1.5. Analytical Procedures of the Research

Thematic analyses represent a method that engages the researcher in qualitative research, aimed at identifying and articulating both implicit and explicit ideas present within the data. These methods are frequently employed for analyzing textual data derived from interviews and focus groups, and they tend to offer greater reliability compared to analyses based solely on words (Guest et al., 2012). This study employed thematic analysis to synthesize and interpret the research findings in alignment with the research objectives. Qualitative data analysis entails the systematic compilation and organization of data, followed by the coding process to identify and categorize themes (Creswell, 2009). According to Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis is a methodology employed to uncover, analyze, and summarize trends (topics) within data. For the purpose of achieving the research objectives and addressing the research questions, the information gathered from primary and secondary sources was carefully organized and prepared for data analysis.

According to Brinkmann (2013), realistic interview reports employ quotations from interviewers to create real and impartial views. The researcher manually coded the codes derived from the field notes. Finally, the researcher thematically integrated and analyzed the data collected from different sources in line with the established research questions and objectives.

1.6. Key Concepts

Proliferation: It refers to a sudden increase of small arms beyond those need for legitimate national security (Nega, 2021).

Small arms: are weapons designed for personal use and shall include: light machine guns, sub-machine guns, including machine pistols, fully automatic rifles and assault rifles, and semi-automatic rifles (Nairobi Protocol , 2004).

Human Security: It is the state of being or feeling safe and being free from fear, anxiety, danger and doubt (Mwenda, 2021).

Impacts: refers to the negative outcomes of small arms (Nega, 2021).

1.7. Ethical Considerations

The researcher maintains the confidentiality of informants about the information they have shared. The researcher prioritizes ensuring their privacy, safety, and consent. The researcher built a positive relationship and obtained explicit agreement from participants before collecting data. The researcher communicates to participants their entitlement to engage voluntarily and their option to withdraw at any time. The researcher will ensure the integrity of this study by appropriately recognizing all data sources.

1.8. Positionality Statement

I was born in Gondar, Amhara Region, Ethiopia. I am well embedded in the community and have recently learned about the impacts of small arms proliferation on human security and development, specifically in Gondar City. My personal observations indicate that the proliferation of small guns intensifies insecurity, as evidenced by its impacts on violence, criminality, and human rights violations. The influence of small arms proliferation on human security in the studied area motivates my research endeavors.

Chapter Two: Theoretical Framework

This chapter explores the theoretical underpinnings of human security, with a specific focus on two approaches that provide context of human security in the review of related literature. These approaches are known as people-centered security (PCS) and freedom from fear approach.

2.1 The Concept of Human Security

The definition of human security varies among authors, researchers, and governments depending on their criteria or assessment methods. The 1994 Human Development Report introduced a new perspective on security, emphasizing the importance of personal and community well-being. This concept encompasses safeguarding against violence, human rights violations, domestic violence, criminal activities, and ethnic tensions (Tapia, et al., 2022).

The concept of human security, which has evolved since the Cold War, emphasizes the importance of progress, development, and the interplay of social and economic issues. This approach questions conventional state-centric frameworks and highlights the significance of individuals, communities, and national security. Strategies encompass enhancing development, promoting equality, ensuring sustainability, advancing democratization, and fostering participation. Transnationalism, food security, and health security present both challenges and opportunities that warrant careful examination (Wali, et al., 2020). The idea of human security is multi-faceted, impacted by both political and theoretical frameworks. A change in perspective on security following the Cold War gave rise to its emergence in the 1990s. Emerging types of studies reflect the expanding understanding of the interdependence of local communities and individuals' means of subsistence (Abubakar, 2007).

According to Gasper (2020), human security, often known as secure human development, is a worldwide component of human development study that highlights the importance of human freedoms, dignity, and vulnerability. For Muguruza (2007), human security emphasis on the welfare, safety, and well-being of individuals, rather than solely focusing on the security of states. The concept of human security serves as a comprehensive framework that combines elements of security, human rights, and development agendas to tackle critical issues such as poverty, population displacement, hunger, disease, and social exclusion. The focus is on prioritizing the protection of human rights above state sovereignty, while also considering the interconnected elements involved,

and guaranteeing safeguards irrespective of race, religion, gender, or political beliefs. According to UN (2009), human security, being a concept that prioritizes the well-being of individuals, places great emphasis on analyzing the individual's role. As a result, it takes into account a wide variety of circumstances that pose a risk to survival, well-being, and respect, and determines the point at which human life becomes unacceptably endangered.

Ensuring human security entails protecting fundamental rights while also confronting major and widespread threats. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) embraced the idea of human security in 1994. It includes seven components: economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community, and political. It addresses challenges such as poverty, ethnic violence, and climate change, while also safeguarding people worldwide from violent acts (Olamide, et al., 2018).

In 1999, the focus of the UN Security Council's human security agenda changed to prioritize the safeguarding of people during armed conflicts. The idea of human security encompasses a broader spectrum of security risks, however its specific boundaries under the UN collective security framework are not clearly defined (Nasu, 2013).

Human security is a concept that complements State security and seeks the protection and empowerment of individuals, putting the livelihood and dignity of individuals at the center of our focus...It does not in any way suggest military intervention, even as a last resort, and thus differs from the notion of the responsibility to protect (Nasu, 2013:111).

During the 1990s, there was a growing emphasis on the concept of 'human security', which shifted the focus towards both national and individual security. Human development has transitioned from solely focusing on economic growth to prioritizing the provision of opportunities for long, healthy lives, knowledge, and resources. The widespread availability of weapons, especially SALW, contributes to feelings of insecurity and fuels conflicts. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and UN Agenda for Disarmament highlight the significance of arms control in promoting security and development (Maletta, et al., 2021).

2.2. People Centered Security Approach

The People-centered Security (PCS) concept emerged in 2012 as a reconceptualization of human security, aiming to balance state and people centric approaches. The people-centered security (PCS) approach, a shift from state-centered thinking at the UN, aims to renew the social contract between the state and its population. Influenced by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, it focuses on security sector reform, transforming institutions to align with democratic norms and development (Sedra, 2022).

According to Winch (2021), human security encompasses safeguarding individuals from various threats, including hunger, disease, crime, and repression, alongside ensuring stability in everyday life. The concept is grounded in the Hobbesian social contract, establishing a connection between societies and a sovereign state. Traditional methods frequently align with liberal social contract theories and methodological nationalism, emphasizing the significance of state authority and accountability. Enhancing individual wellbeing is essential for maintaining state stability.

For Jyalita (2023), people-centered human security approach highlights the necessity of focusing on individuals and communities within security discussions, shifting away from conventional state-centric frameworks. The government's lack of adequate attention to individuals' well-being can be remedied by emphasizing human security, directing resources towards neglected social sectors, strategizing agricultural initiatives, and encouraging public involvement. For Axworthy et al., (2014), in 1998, the Human Security Network (HSN) was established with the objective of enhancing human security, promoting human rights, strengthening humanitarian law, preventing conflict, and fostering democracy. Nonetheless, the network has yet to achieve its intended goals.

The people-centered security approach represents a paradigm shift away from security models focusing on the state and towards models focusing on individuals and communities. Human security reinterprets conventional security within international relations, emphasizing constructive results and the interconnectedness of physical/material and psychosocial elements. Risk management strategies have the potential to enhance human security (Busumtwi-Sam, J, 2008). The Ogata-Sen Commission report human security now presents a cohesive and adaptable definition of 'human security', emphasizing the importance of being free from want, indignity, and fear. It proposes a systematic approach to integrate explanatory and normative agendas, facilitating connections among various intellectual and policy communities (Gasper, 2005).

The literature above indicates that the people-centered security (PCS) approach safeguards individual and community threats rather than solely concentrating on national or state security concerns. In the study area, small arms are widely available and misused, leading to loss of life, internal displacement, economic crises, and law and order breakdowns. These effects weaken human security by escalating violence, fueling conflicts, and perpetuating organized urban crimes. Therefore, the people-centered security (PCS) approach prioritizes minimizing the proliferation of small arms.

2.3. Freedom from Fear Approach

Fear arises from negative ideas about future occurrences, which are frequently coupled with a lack of confidence and control. This potent motivator of conduct emphasizes the connections between human security goals and the likelihood of suffering (Tapia, et al., 2022). The 1994 Human Development report introduced the concept of human security, emphasizing individual security over national protection. The report aimed to shift focus from threats to the daily plight of people worldwide (Tapia, et al., 2022).

The notion of human security, especially the "freedom from fear" framework, has increasingly become prominent in modern discussions, highlighting a transition from conventional state-focused security models to a more individual-oriented viewpoint. This transformation is based on the understanding that security must emphasize the individual and their rights, rather than solely concentrating on the state or territorial integrity. Human Security aims to safeguard vital human lives from threats without hindering long-term human fulfillment, using human rights as a tool in political struggles. The core principles of human security, encompass both "freedom from fear" and "freedom from want," which collectively represent the fundamental aspects of human dignity and well-being (Lahiry, 2020; Gasper, 2005; Puspita, 2020).

Human security is essentially characterized by the dual concepts of "freedom from fear" and "freedom from want," which collectively create a thorough framework for comprehending security that extends beyond conventional state-focused models. This viewpoint emphasizes the importance of the individual, arguing that genuine security is attainable only when individuals are liberated from everyday concerns and existential dangers, including violence, poverty, and environmental degradation (Matlin et al., 2021; Spector & Wolf, 2000; Alsalihi & Al-Najjar, 2020).

The notion of human security redirects attention from the state to the individual, positioning the person as the central unit of examination, emphasizing the importance of living free from fear and want. This concept emerged as a response to the intricate emergencies that occurred during the 1990s and 2000s. Human security encompasses the protection and enhancement of essential freedoms for individuals, enabling them to assume control over their lives while tackling interrelated challenges such as conflict, poverty, economic instability, access to healthcare, and illiteracy (Large et al., 2006).

Reinsberg et al., (2022), introduce a Human Security Index (HSI) that combines "freedom from fear" and "freedom from want" to evaluate human security in various contexts, particularly during conflict or economic instability, while tackling intricate security challenges in particular geopolitical situations. Zarin (2007) explores, the necessity for the EU to take into account the relationship between soft security matters such as rights and economic stability alongside hard security issues, highlighting the importance of a comprehensive understanding of security that goes beyond conventional military focused frameworks. Thomas and Tow (2002), argued that, in order to adequately address the vulnerabilities and urgent dangers that populations encounter during times of crisis, humanitarian interventions should first and foremost focus on human security. Wei et al., (2017), explore the relationship between environmental changes and psychological responses, suggesting that the pursuit of "freedom from fear" is strongly related to how people feel about their own personal safety and security. To create policies that help people feel safe and part of a community while simultaneously meeting their material needs, this psychological component is crucial.

Chapter Three: Impacts of Small Arms on Human Security

In this chapter, the researcher analyzes the overall impacts of proliferation of small arms on human security. The threat posed to human security is the main focus of this analysis, which examines the negative impacts of small arms in the community.

3.1. Human Cost of Small Arms

The presence of small arms has a profound impact on human security, resulting in the loss of thousands of lives, forced displacement, and restricted access to vital resources, which in turn leads to severe personal, economic, and psychological distress (Porter, 2003). The use of small arms has a profound impact on humanitarian efforts, resulting in tragic and immediate loss of life. Estimates indicate that a significant number of individuals, approximately 300,000, lost their lives as a result of small arms in situations resembling conflicts, whether intentional or unintentional. This fails to consider instances of suicide, accidental death, or domestic violence. Various groups of individuals are impacted in different ways, including young adult men, women, single women, and children who experience the greatest impact (Muggah, et al., 2001).

Small arms deaths are a matter of great concern, with a staggering number of over 500,000 fatalities occurring annually worldwide, and an alarming 300,000 in conflict zones. Weapons of a certain nature have been known to result in fatalities, affecting both civilians and those involved in combat. It has been observed that approximately 35% of these casualties are civilians. Over 200,000 deaths occur in non-war areas. It is unfortunate that women frequently fall victim to small arms, and the use of weapons in domestic violence is a widespread issue that transcends cultural boundaries. Small arms are a significant cause of mortality among children and youth in many developed countries, making up a substantial portion of conflict victims (Cukier, 2002).

Violence caused by guns in developed countries, especially those with high rates of gun ownership, is a major contributor to loss of life, resulting in 34,040 deaths in 1996. The estimated annual cost of gun violence in the US is a staggering \$100 billion (Mogire, 2004). Small arms violence has devastating consequences, the unregulated accessibility of these weapons exacerbates the intensity and duration of violence, while also eroding the rule of law, social cohesion, and trust (Porter, 2003).

The proliferation of small arms in South Asia presents a grave danger to human security, resulting in armed conflicts and forced migration. The widespread use of firearms and the lack of strict regulations have resulted in a significant number of casualties. The decline in law and order has contributed to the rise of transnational organized crime and the illicit production of firearms, as unscrupulous politicians and military personnel engage in the buying and selling of these weapons (Banerjee et al., 2002).

Conflicts in Africa are fueled and prolonged by the availability of small guns, which also adds to a rise in criminal activity, out-migration, epidemics, and humanitarian disasters. Northern Ghana and Nigeria are among the regions that are latently experiencing conflict, and they are particularly vulnerable to the threat of weapons proliferation (Yankey, 2005). Research on small guns in pastoralist communities in East Africa sheds light on the vulnerabilities that contribute to the devastation, loss of life, and cultural erasure that these groups experience (Mulugeta, 2017).

There were more than 500 million small arms and light weapons in circulation in 2001, contributing to a substantial number of deaths worldwide. Over 46 major conflicts have used them as their principal weapon since 1990, resulting in four million casualties, 90% of whom were civilians and 80% of whom were children and women. Features like as greater firepower, ease of use, low cost, and widespread availability are offered by these weapons (Kumar, 2008).

Small arms and light weapons pose a significant threat to human security due to their affordability and ease of construction. States are the only legitimate sources of these weapons, but they are being misused by insurgent groups, terrorists, and criminals. This misuse results in human casualties, disrupts development, creates refugee crises, and fuels conflict. Controlling the spread and misuse of these weapons requires responsible attitudes from both individuals and states (Kumar, 2008:777).

3.2. Small Arms and Ethnic Conflict in Ethiopia

Small arms proliferation has escalated armed conflicts, causing armed violence in various states. Children are particularly vulnerable, with Colombia causing 1,333 homicides in 1999 and Israel-Palestine resulting in 467 deaths due to gun-related violence (Kumar, 2008). For Lock (1997), small arms, or light weapons, play a crucial role in the majority of ongoing conflicts and have unfortunately caused a significant number of casualties in wars since 1945. The issue of small arms dominance in internal conflicts is receiving increased attention, with a growing discussion on the

role of ethnicity and nationalism as factors contributing to warfare. According to Bankale (2016), the widespread availability of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) across Africa plays a crucial role in exacerbating conflicts, thereby undermining human security and hindering development efforts. According to Cochrane et al., (2021), illegal weapons trade in Ethiopia is a growing concern due to its expansion alongside ethnic, religious, and political conflicts. This includes inter communal clashes, violence. For Kenaw (2020), Ethiopia is part of the Eastern African region, grappling with internal armed conflicts and illegal arms proliferation. Small arms are valued in various cultural and pragmatic contexts, with many in highland areas identifying as "heroic men" and in lowlands as "warrior race" for livestock protection and access to resources.

According to Nega (2021), over a million people in Ethiopia illegally owned guns, resulting in numerous casualties across the country. Small arms have led to violence due to racism and crime, as they have diverse cultural and pragmatic uses among different regions. For Aemro (2017), small arms in Ethiopia pose a substantial danger to conflict and peace, inflicting widespread damage and undermining sustainable development. Their simplicity in operation, durability, and ability to remain hidden contribute to their potential for misuse, impacting many individuals.

3.3. Small Arms and Crime in Gondar City

Based on the data gathered from key informant interviews and secondary sources from Gondar City Police Department Bureau(2024), the proliferation of small arms and weapons has played a direct role in the alarming increase of various criminal activities, including robbery, killing, kidnapping, injury and acts of violence. Similarly, the interviews conducted with the city residents implies that recently, criminals in Gondar City have kidnapped numerous individuals for ransom and most of these crimes have been committed using small arms, typically in small vehicles and at night. Consequently, small arms serve as the primary tools for various forms of criminal activity in Gondar city. The increase of illegal small arms in Gondar City, especially following the 2020 conflict in Northern Ethiopia, has resulted in a notable rise in criminal activity. Gangs have exploited the availability of these weapons to terrorize residents, looting resources and kidnapping individuals for ransom. These crimes, often conducted at night using small vehicles, highlight the severe impact of small arms on community safety.

Table 1: Overview of crime Trends From 2020-2024

Year	Types of crimes		
	No of People killed	No of People Injured	No of People kidnapped
2020	60	26	-
2021	61	32	18
2022	55	52	22
2023	62	46	09
2024	79	47	64
Total	317	203	113

Source: Gondar City Police Department Bureau 2024

The above table1 presents a comprehensive record of crime statistics over a five-year period (2020-2024). It includes data on; number of people killed, injured, and kidnapped across different types of crimes.

Killing: - The data in the table 1 clearly shows a general increase in the number of fatalities over the five-year span, with some acknowledged fluctuations. The recorded 60 deaths in 2020, and a slight increase to 61 in 2021. The people's collective efforts in the region during the Northern-Ethiopian war led to a small decline to 55 in 2022.

In 2023 a rise to 62, and a significant jump to 79 in 2024. The consistent numbers from 2020 to 2023 there was a stable occurrence of killings during that period. Conversely, the sharp spike in 2024 indicates that a particular trigger for this increase in deaths have been involved, as the large rise from 2023 to 2024, going from 62 to 79 fatalities. Interviews conducted with the city residents indicated that in the historic and tourist destination city of Gondar, killing were occurring occasionally, but in the past six months, there has been an unusual increase. As reported by the Amhara Association of America (2024), on August 29, 2024, a contingent of armed assailants shot and killed a woman and her daughter in Kebele 16 in Gondar City (Central Gondar Zone, Amhara Region).

On the day of the incident, a group of organized robbers stormed the residence of a woman named Woizero Mebrat in Lideta village, demanding she accompany them. When she refused, they forcibly dragged both her and her daughter, a graduate student, out of their house and tragically shot both of them. A neighbor, fearing for his life, fled his home after hearing the gunshots. The robbers, attempting to conceal their identities, fired at the fleeing neighbor, injuring him as well. Woizero Mebrat owned a small hotel, making her a particularly attractive target for the robbers. The assailants are believed to be connected with, and have been acting under direction from local Prosperity Party regime Authorities (Amhara Association of America, 2024).


The details given in the above indicate that the killing of Woizero Mebrat and her daughter extends beyond a kidnapping for ransom.

“Let me share with you my personal experience in this regard. In December 2022, my colleagues and I prepared a short proposal on how to minimize kidnapping in the city. Additionally, the team received a letter of support from the university research and technology transfer office. The team had presented the letter to the Gondar city peace and security office. The officer reviewed the letter and assured us that he would contact us after consulting with his colleagues. After a long time, we went back to the office and asked them why they hadn’t called us. But their response was ridiculous. So, the team concluded that they are either actors for the problem or collaborators” (Interview with city Resident, 25 July 2024).

According to the city resident, it is not possible to move around in the city from 12:00 pm to 10:00 pm. The government security forces are active at this time and the city is still under command post and restriction. You can get at home on time. You can be careful. But the people are being kidnapped even in their homes and residents are under threat. For the last six months, the people of the city are in a terrible situation and people are leaving the city if they can. However, the city residents confirmed that Woizero Mebrat killed one of the kidnappers and wounded another in her struggle. The dead kidnapper was found buried on a mountain by his friends and the wounded one was captured while hiding himself and receiving treatment in hospital. Interview above assured that the kidnappers were government militia.

In line with this BBC NEWS አማርኛ (2024) reported that, Amhara National Regional State Peace and Security (ANRSPS) bureau confirmed that government security forces make significant sacrifices, including risking their lives and prioritizing public safety and lasting peace for the country. However, there are concerns that certain government security forces may be engaged in different criminal activities and 14 security forces were arrested for suspicions of murder and kidnapping in Gondar City.

In line with this Key informants (KII-01-2024), from the Gondar City Police Department Bureau acknowledged their institution's efforts in addressing these issues, but admitted that more needs to be done.



UPDATE

The Amhara Association of America (AAA) has verified that on August 29th, 2024, a group of armed men shot and killed a woman and her daughter in Kebele 16 of Gondar city (Central Gondar Zone, Amhara Region, Ethiopia). On the day of the incident, a group of organized robbers stormed the residence of a woman named Woizero Mebrat in Lideta village, demanding she accompany them. When she refused, they forcibly dragged both her and her daughter, a graduate student, out of their house and tragically shot both of them. A neighbor, fearing for his life, fled his home after hearing the gunshots. The robbers, attempting to conceal their identities, fired at the fleeing neighbor, injuring him as well. Woizero Mebrat owned a small hotel, making her a particularly attractive target for the robbers. The assailants are believed to be connected with, and have been acting under direction from local Prosperity Party regime authorities.

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Website www.AmharaAmerica.org

Source: Amhara Association of America (AAA) 2024

Injuries:- The table in above shows a noticeable rise in the number of people injured in crimes over time. The number of incidents recorded increased from 2020 to 2024, reaching a peak of 52 in 2022. However, after a slight decrease to 46 in 2023, there was an increase to 47 in 2024. The significant increase between 2021 and 2022 was indicative of a period marked by a surge in violence, potentially linked to rising political instability, civil unrest, a breakdown of law and order. There are a slight decrease in 2023, followed by a minor uptick in 2024.

Kidnapping: - The data indicates a fluctuating trend, with the first recorded kidnappings occurring in 2021. An important surge in 2024 possibly reflected the emergence of new criminal activities within the study area. A changeable trend with no special pattern until 2024 has been illustrated by the data where the numbers nearly doubled, displaying the increasing severity of the crime. The number of kidnapping cases reached 64 by 2024, a significant increase. The data implies that the deteriorating security situation in the city has led to an increase in organized crime. An upward trend starting with 18 cases in 2021 and reaching 22 in 2022 is illustrated by the data. There is a slight decline to 9 cases in 2023, but an important surge to 64 cases in 2024 follows.

According to BBC News Amharic (2024), in recent years, in Amhara, Oromia and Tigray regions, the kidnapping and killing of civilians, including children and women has been increase. For instance recently, more than 100 students who were going to Addis Ababa from Debarq University in the Amhara region were kidnapped in Gebre Guracha area of Oromia region and were asked for ransom. In Tigray Regional State 12 women were killed who were taken hostage and asked for ransom. According to East African Review (2024) news entitled “brutally murdered after ransom paid, Ethiopian government forces open fire on mourning civilians” depicted that;

On September 1st, 2024, as a 2-year-old child, Nolawit Zegeyew, was brutally murdered by her kidnappers, despite her father’s desperate efforts to secure her release. Zegeyew, heartbroken and desperate, reported the kidnapping to the local police, only to be dismissed and told to seek help from Fano. Left to manage the crisis on his own, Zegeyew turned to individuals at the Telecommunications Corporation to trace the kidnappers’ location, but his pleas for assistance were ignored. Despite being abandoned by the authorities, Zegeyew followed the kidnappers’ instructions, dropping the ransom money at a remote location just outside the city limits.



Source: British Broadcasting Corporation, 2024

Based on the information provided in the above, kidnapping incidents have been addressed by the local authorities with shown inefficiencies for a long time. Duties are being neglected, and collaboration with kidnapers is being undertaken by security forces.

According to the BBC Amharic News (2024) the residents of Gondar city came out demonstration in the area of the city called Piasa to demand delayed justice for the child Nolawit were attacked by police and at least four people were killed by gunfire.

“The reason for the prevalence of robbery, kidnaping and killing is the existence of weak and corrupted security and the absence of law enforcement. When we report the problem to local security forces they respond that "We have no power and negotiate with the kidnapers". “There is nothing else we can do.” lawlessness has increase in the city. It seems like there is a force that wants the city to destabilize and disintegrate. "Even when we go out and ask for justice, there is a group that wants to silence us with bullets." The criminals are working with the security forces. This indicates the weakness of the justice system has worsened from time to time” (BBC Amharic News, 2024).

Interview was conducted with the city residents indicated that the issue of kidnapping is very complex issue and created decline in trust among individuals. Currently kidnapping becomes effective because of the information provided by the victim's friends or neighbors. Sometimes, even family members engage in this type of activity. Therefore, these actions undermine the trust that exists between individuals and society as a whole. Previously, the

kidnappers were taking people as hostage if they do have relatives or child/ children who is or are Diaspora who do have wealth. Now they have started to take what they find from the house, and a poor child is being strangled and taken away as hostage as it becomes familiar to give money by pleading/begging from the public.

The city residents were asked why the crime rate has increased in the city? The people indicated that since the beginning of the armed conflict between the government and Fano forces in July 2015, various areas of the region, including Gondar city, have experienced a significant increase in crime. The persistent political crises in the country fosters a conducive environment to criminal actions, including the kidnapping and murder of innocent individuals. The conflicts that occur in different areas of the region at different times have not only claimed the lives of numerous civilians, but they have also complicated the residents' daily activities.

Based on the data gathered from residents there are three distinct groups that involved in various criminal activities specifically robbery, kidnapping and killing in Gondar City. The first group consists of government security forces, including militias and police. The second group comprises individuals who are not affiliated with the Fano structure. Lastly, there are organized groups that take their own advantages from the current political instability in the region.

From Table 1 in the above an important concern was created by the recording of 317 fatalities over five years. Injuries were reported as 203 in number, with 113 kidnappings also documented, indicating severe crime levels in the city. The rise in killings and kidnappings in 2024 was viewed with concern.

3.4. Small Arms and Internal Displacement

Small arms and light weapons as a source of crime, lawlessness, anarchy and a direct threat to human security and development. The proliferation of small arms has serious implications for physical, social, economic and political wellbeing of human beings at the global level. Small arms and light weapons kill one person every two minutes somewhere in the world both in the states plagued by civil strife through crime and drug related homicide, suicides and gun accidents (Kumar, 2008).

According to Pattugalan (2004), the relocation of population the ramifications of the widespread distribution of small firearms are also evident in the indescribable suffering faced by individuals who are forcefully evicted from their residences as a result of armed conflicts. Gun violence causes significant trauma for victims and their families, while small arms use increases conflict intensity, displacement, and child exploitation. It also undermines human security by threatening vulnerable sectors like women, children, and humanitarian workers (Pattugalan, 2004). According to the key informants (KII-01, 2024), more than 90% of crimes are committed with the help of illegal weapons. The impact is huge. Especially this year in 2024, there is a high crime of kidnapping in Gondar city. All this is done with small arms which are possessed illegally.

In fact, due to the increase in crime and many people fleeing Gondar, people say that "only the kidnappers and the poor are left in Gondar". Many of the business men fled with their money. It was another country like Libya and others where I heard this in the media before, but now we saw such crimes here from our city. Very known tourist attracting city, known by hostage takers and no one comes here anymore for tourism purpose (KII-01, 2024).

Another key informant interview (KII-02, 2024), elaborated that; individuals in the city who possess comparatively higher wealth often become targets of kidnapping. Recently, one medical doctor who was director of the University of Gondar's medical college was kidnapped and asked to pay two million Ethiopian birr. Eventually, he paid the required money, released and he left the city. He is currently residing in Addis Ababa, the capital city of Ethiopia. This situation should serve as a warning tale for others, particularly those in comparable professional fields. Other experts also relocated to Addis Ababa, concerned about the possibility of encountering a similar issue.

3.5. Small Arms and Economic Crisis

Africa suffers a staggering loss of \$18 billion every year as a result of devastating wars, civil wars, and insurgencies. These armed conflicts have a profound impact on the economy, causing a significant decrease of 15 per capita. In peaceful nations, gun violence has notable indirect consequences, such as a decrease in both physical and mental well-being, increased expenses for society, and reduced productivity (Amero, 2017).

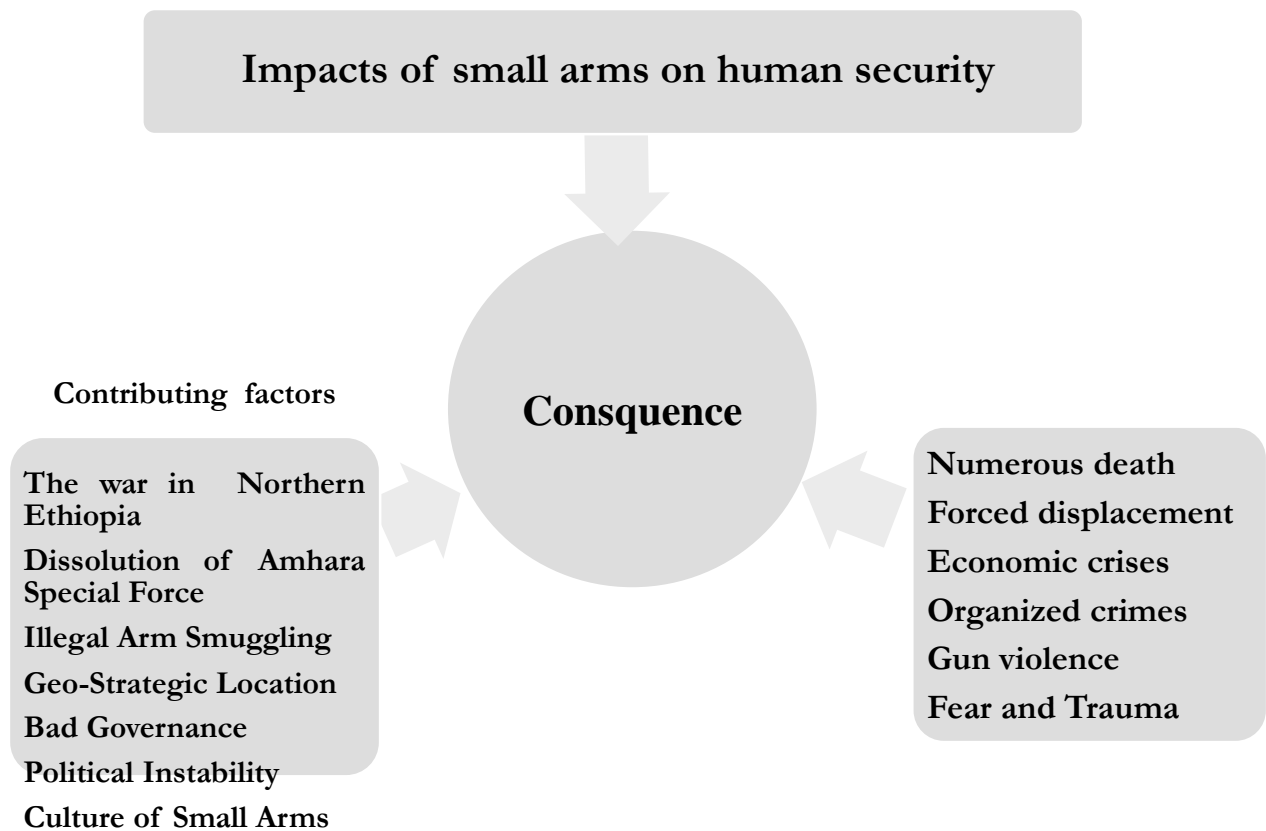
Amhara Regional State Peace and Security office pointed out that lack of peace is the main problem for social, political and economic crisis in the region (BBC NEWS አማርኛ, 2024). Interviews conducted with the city residents indicated that in terms of the economy, it is now a barrier for individuals to work and earn their daily bread. For a variety of reasons, those who unlawfully armed people put significant barriers in the way of civilian mobility.

The economic activities in the city are become very weak, shops closed early, factory workers go to their home early, transport vehicles stop their work early, cafeterias and hotels closed early. These all affects the economic situation of the city severely. Merchants have left the city and searching for a better safe place to lead their life and moved to Bahir Dar and the capital city Addis Ababa (KII-01, 2024).

The early closure of shops, factories, and other facilities implies that a potential issue of insecurity in the city. This is supported by internal displacement of businessmen, different professionals from Gondar city to relatively secure areas like Bahir Dar and Addis Ababa. If these patterns persist, the overall situation is anticipated to deteriorate, as the closure of businesses and reduced economic activity impose even more severe economic difficulties on the citizens.

As other interview conducted with the key informants (KII-02, 2024), indicated that the war in North Ethiopia, the current war between ENDF and Fano, the absence of job opportunities, and the economic crisis have led many individuals to engage in criminal activities. In order to provide for their own needs, they resort to kidnapping individuals and stealing property from private homes and institutions. To accomplish this, they primarily use small arms as their tools.

A large increase in small arms in the city is indicated by the findings of the study. Human security has been harmed by this, with an important decline observed among city residents. The potential effects of small arms' common accessibility in society are explicitly illustrated by the graph below. Human cost of, individual displacement, economic crisis, conflict rise, gun violence, and escalation of organized crime, such as robbery, and killing, result from the proliferation of small arms in Gondar City. Activities such as kidnapping and violence are also included in the consequences.



Source: Developed by the researcher

Chapter Four: Factors for the Proliferation and Managing of Small Arms

In this chapter, the researcher focuses on the contributing factors for the proliferation of small arms and mechanisms to regulate and reduce the weapons in the study area.

4.1. Factors Proliferation Small Arms

The proliferation of small arms in Sub-Saharan Africa is driven by factors like lack of transparency, corruption, and insecurity. These weapons are easily accessible to paramilitary forces and untrained civilians, making them easy to operate (Tukur, et al., 2021). As a result of globalization's effects on society, economy, and culture, conflicts have evolved to focus on the erosion of state power and sovereignty. As a result of the rise of human security as a peacemaking paradigm, the majority of wars nowadays are fought within states, with weaker governments confronting the "insecurity dilemma" within their own boundaries (Taya, 2003). Nigeria's security is threatened by small arms and light weapons proliferation in the 21st century. Most Nigerian conflicts and crimes have used small arms and light weapons. Women and children have died most from these weapons (Idehen, et al., 2021). Personal security measures like buying firearms might exacerbate vulnerability. The 2018 UN Secretary-General's disarmament agenda called for communities and national governments to expedite disarmament (Tapia, et al., 2022).

4.2. Proliferation of Small Arms in Ethiopia

The illicit trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) in Ethiopia poses a significant threat to peace and security. This dangerous activity is motivated by the desire for self-protection, societal norms, and the erosion of peace. Principal participants comprise incarcerated individuals, law enforcement personnel, paramilitary groups, and community figures (Guta, et al., 2024). On the other hand, Nega (2021), elaborated the proliferation of small arms in Ethiopia is due to factors such as ease of ownership, lack of training, easy involvement of arms traffickers, security weaknesses, and a ready market in conflict areas contribute to conflict violence, especially in developing countries. The prevalence of illicit guns in Ethiopia has been present in various manifestations far before the government acknowledged the magnitude of the issue and its potential impact on the security and safety of the Ethiopian state (Guta, et al., 2024).

Ethiopians have long worried about the availability of weapons for self-defense, perceiving them as a sign of both a perceived need and an indication of unchecked proliferation. People think they can defend themselves and their property with firearms, thus they rely on them for self-defense. Throughout the northern region of Ethiopia, this custom has persisted, enduring the long years of internal and external conflicts and civilian unrest (Guta, et al., 2024).

Small arms are weapons that can be easily transported and used by both state and non-state actors, including military, police, and criminals. The production of small guns is a worldwide industry, with significant contributions from both government-owned and privately-owned enterprises. Underdeveloped nations manufacture weaponry, while illicit local facilities disseminate them. The proliferation of small arms contributes to insecurity, lawlessness, and anarchy, obstructing relief programs and hindering development. The global legal market is valued at approximately \$4 billion each year, with the United States, Russia, and Poland being the leading suppliers (Kumar, 2008).

The proliferation of small arms in Ethiopia is a serious concern, as it contributes to conflict, political instability, and hinders sustainable development. This issue is driven by factors such as racism and trafficking, which further exacerbate the security threat. The presence of over 100 million uncontrolled weapons in crisis zones intensifies conflict (Nega, 2021). According to Maru (2008), conflicts between communities and between ethnic groups have been exacerbated by the widespread availability of small arms and light weapons in the nation, notwithstanding these efforts. Besides, Cochrane et al, (2021) argued that, the demand for weapons in the Amhara region is driven by various factors, including traditions, self-defense, organized crime, armed militias, political and ethnic mobilizations, and foreign interests. The rise of the illegal weapons trade is rooted in uncertainty and insecurity.

The researcher wants to highlight the multitude of factors that contribute to the proliferation of small arms in Gondar City. Based on the data obtained from the key informants, interview from the residents of the city and secondary sources, it is evident that following factors play a crucial role for proliferation of small arms in Amhara region and Gondar City in general.

4.2.1. The War in Northern Ethiopia

Small weapons proliferation management requires community engagement and education. Public knowledge of small arms risks and community-led disarming efforts can drastically limit weapon circulation. Tanzania, where small guns have proliferated, has found that community involvement helps solve security issues (Ndawana et al., 2018).

Key informants (KII-02-2024) conducted an interview, which revealed that thousands of people with no or limited firearms experience took part in the conflict against the TPLF. After the war ended with the Pretoria agreement, those who had participated in the war continued to carry their firearms. They were not subject to registration, disarmament, demobilization, or reintegration (DDR). This situation facilitated the acquisition of small arms by thousands of youth from both the government and TPLF fighters who were held captive. Now, these huge numbers of small arms have never been registered, youths have never gotten orientation from the government on how to use them, and this leads to a crisis in the city. As previously mentioned, the issue at hand pertains to the number of weapons in the city, the identity of their owners, the timing of registration, the potential consequences if a person fails to register their small arms, and the lack of similar initiatives in the city. Previously, we knew that when similar problems happened, there were mechanisms to fix them, like government institutions or social values. These days, neither government institutions nor social values function properly. No more acceptance from society.

In line with this, Metekia (2022) explained, Ethiopia's law enforcement encounters significant obstacles in addressing arms trafficking, primarily stemming from constrained resources and insufficient training. To address this issue, the federal government ought to enhance the capabilities of regional police, engage in grassroots interventions, and implement a consistent strategy throughout all regions and borders. Lack of a strict law on firearms and the fact that the previous law has not been implemented is the lion's share of the increase in arms trafficking (KII_01, 2024). Guta et al., (2024) explained that the trafficking of illicit small arms and light weapons poses a significant threat to the peace and security of Ethiopia, influenced by various factors related to demand, supply, and misuse. For Maru (2008), control mechanisms for small arms in Ethiopia include disarmament or bringing arms under government control, with the latter being preferred due to its cultural and practical value.

4.2.2. Dissolution of Amhara Special Force

According to Chanie (2024), the Ethiopian government's decision in April 2023 to dissolve Amhara regional forces and disarm intensified the conflict in the Amhara region. The Ethiopian National Defense Force was tasked with swiftly disarming Amhara Special Forces, yet a significant number of Amhara Special Forces opted to align themselves with the Fano fighters. After the Amhara Special Forces, was disbanded by the Federal Government political decision to disarm Amhara Special Forces, small arms and light weapons were put into the hands of the arms traders in the community in Amhara region. According to Atrsaw (2023), the Amhara Fano became stronger after the regional Special Forces were disbanded. A considerable number of Amhara Special Force members defected and joined the Fano to combat the ENDF, which had deployed extensively to disarm the Fanos in the area. There was a significant conflict between Amhara and federal forces in July and early August 2023, which also affected urban centers in Amhara regional State.

Cochrane et al., (2021) argued that, since 1969 false narratives that target the Amhara community, government's long-standing marginalization of the Amhara people, border disputes, and concerns over territorial integrity in areas like Wollo, Gondar, and Welkait, have contributed to a sense of uncertainty and instability. As a result, Amhara people have resorted to acquiring weapons through illegal means. From human security perspective, the Ethiopian government's disarmament efforts and subsequent dissolution of the Amhara Special Forces have increased fear and anxiety among vulnerable Amhara communities in different parts of the country. This security threat has led the Amhara people to believe that we are at war and the people actively supports and participates in Fano fighters.

Moreover, as the data obtained from the key informant interview (KII-01, 2024) indicates that, one of the consequences of dissolving the Amhara Special Force due to political decisions, which led to firearms falling into the hands of illegal arms traffickers. The disbanding of Amhara Special Forces, without adequate measures to secure or track the weapons, has allowed illegal arms to spread unchecked, fueling violence and instability in the region. One of the reasons for the proliferation of small arms in the region that is now circulating in the market is that the weapons that were in the hands of the Special Forces were not handled properly.

According to the city residents, the way the city administration and other government offices working to control small arms are very weak or null. Concerned institutions are become useless because of the ongoing civil war in the country. Let alone controlling small arms trade, they are in a position to defend them.

All the aforementioned problems happened following the existence of small arms in the city. However, the origin of all problems is political decay. The political situations in the country create fertile ground for criminals to engage in small arms smuggling, kidnaping, looting of innocents' property and killing (Interview conducted with the city residents, 2024).

4.2.3. Illegal Arm Smuggling

According to Guta, et al., (2024), Ethiopia, with over one million illegally possessed weapons, is heavily affected by this trafficking. Factors contributing to this trafficking include easy availability, security dilemmas, and lack of skills to manage guns. As noted by Efrat, small arms contributes to broader social costs that threaten human welfare, particularly in regions already facing economic challenges (Efrat, 2010). According Kenaw (2020) Ethiopia is among the nations that have been significantly impacted by the issue of arm smuggling and its associated challenges. As the data obtained from the key informants from Former Police Officer at North Gondar Administration Zone depicted that

Currently, the biggest threat to Gondar city is the presence of illegal weapons owned by numerous individuals. It does not mean that there are no other threats, but at this time, nothing like illegal weapons is of concern to Gondar city. The problem, then, is that crimes such as killings, kidnappings, and other kinds are directly related to illegal arms. On account of this, the respected human being's life is being wasted; humankind is losing its life, and people are exposed to mental and psychological damage. When night comes, a person worries about what will happen tomorrow. Parents worry about their children until they come back from school. The precious human life is being lost (KII 01, 2024).

From the above, the widespread presence of illegal weapons poses the greatest threat to Gondar city which is directly linked to an increase in violent crimes such as killings and kidnapping and resulting in the tragic loss of life and deep psychological distress among residents. As the data obtained from with the city residents (2024), shows that Small arms have been creating multifaceted problems for the community in Gondar city and surrounding areas. A group of gangs, armed with illegal small arms, entered the homes of residents in Azezo, a sub city of Gondar, and forcibly looted cattle and other resources. This has been happening in the city since 2020, following the outbreak of war in northern Ethiopia, which gave many individuals the opportunity to acquire small arms in various forms. This condition created constant fear of violence affects daily life, with people worrying about their security and that of their loved ones, especially at night. Parents live in anxiety until their children return safely from school. People are unable to move from place to place to perform their daily routine works.

The interview conducted with key informants (KII-01, 2024), revealed that those opposed to the peace and security of region and Gondar City aim to escalate the illicit arms trade in the region. Particularly, following the Northern war, the TPLF leaders engaged in the illicit arms trade and sent firearms to several Amhara regions, including Gondar, with the intention of intensifying the ongoing conflict in the area.

Table 2: The number of weapons seized in Gondar City from 2021-2024

Year	Pistols	AK-47s	Different Ammunition
2021	922	50	20,870
2022	118	5	4
2023	628	63	8,335
2024	274	19	12,175
Total	1,942	137	41,384

Source: Gondar City Police Department Bureau 2024

The data obtained from the Gondar City Police Department Bureau, with important trends and understandings into security issues shown through the number of weapons seized in Gondar City from 2021-2024. The data was divided into three categories: Pistols, AK-47s, and multiple Ammunition.

The seizure of 922 pistols in 2021 set a new record. In contrast, only 50 AK-47s were confiscated, alongside 20870 rounds of ammunition. This implies that the rise in personal weapon ownership, which correlates with heightened crime rates and insecurity in the city, is associated with the increased number of pistols. The high count indicates the presence of potentially hazardous ammunition stockpiles.

In 2022, there was a significant decrease in the number of weapons. A total of 118 pistols and 5 AK-47s, along with a minor quantity of just 4 rounds of ammunition, were seized. This indicated a temporary decrease in either the demand for weapons or criminal activity. The data revealed a resurgence in weapon seizures in 2023 observed a sharp increase in the number of seized pistols to 628, along with the seizure of 63 AK-47s. Additionally, the city security forces confiscated 8335 rounds of ammunition. This rebound could reflect a renewed surge in the illegal arms trade or deteriorating security conditions. The significant amount of ammunition seized points to increased risks of armed confrontations or organized criminal activities in Gondar City. The seizure of 274 pistols in 2024 reflected a decrease from the previous year. The confiscation of rounds saw a significant increase, reaching a total of 12,175 rounds, the second-highest amount in the last four years. Law enforcement agencies also seized 19 AK-47s.

Over a four-year span, 1,942 pistols, 137 AK-47s, and 41,384 rounds of ammunition were seized, according to the data in table 2. The year-to-year variation indicates that law enforcement operations experienced differing success levels. It suggests changes in illicit arms trafficking dynamics. Potential changes in Gondar City's security situation were also suggested by these variations. Based on the data gathered from a key informant interview in Gondar City depicted that;

In addition to performing their official duties, some of the police, militia, and other security agencies inside the government's security and safety framework also act as a supplier of firearms, which contributes to the spread of illicit weapons. Generally, there are indications that the illegal arms stockpile in the city of Gondar may be larger than the legal one (KII-01, 2024).

Based on the data presented in the above the supply of firearms, eased by some government securities including the police and militia, has proliferated illegal weapons, in spite of official responsibilities under the government's security framework. A large increase in illegal arms in the City has been caused by this participation. There are also signs that indicate the stockpile of illicit

firearms in the city may exceed that of legal ones. An important problem with the regulation, and distribution of weapons is being highlighted, thereby putting public safety, and security in the area at risk. According to Metekia (2022), illegal trafficking of firearms in Ethiopia extends beyond mere commerce; it implicates government officials, clan leaders, and members of law enforcement. Various ethnic groups and clans resort to the use of illicit arms as a means to counter or launch attacks on neighboring regions, frequently driven by underlying political, religious, and resource-related tensions.

4.2.4. Geo-Strategic Location

The widespread presence of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) in sub-Saharan Africa can be attributed to the challenges posed by open borders and the complexities of patrolling them, given the presence of multiple neighboring countries. Nations should actively prioritize the establishment of secure borders to enhance the safety of security forces and citizens, with the goal of minimizing the accessibility and affordability of arms dealers' activities (Nganga, 2008). Proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW) is a major problem on a worldwide scale since illicit arms transfer does not respect national borders. Crime groups, assassination squads, terrorists, and ethnic militias now own firearms, which makes everyday life difficult and prevents people from living in harmony with one another. In many cases, non state actors' possession of SALW makes the state helpless in the face of violent confrontation (Brown, 2018).

The city resident were asked about the contributing factors for the proliferation of small arms in the study area. They expressed this is not the main reason for the problem, but aggravates the situations. Sudan near to Gondar city and there is no stable government and crisis in Tigray region may aggravate the problem. But, the main problem is internal and political crisis. In line with this key informant interview (KII-01, 2024) depicted that Gondar's proximity to Sudan and Eritrea, coupled with weak governance in these regions, has made it a hotspot for arms trafficking. The Ethio-Sudan border region is highly conducive to the smuggling of a wide range of goods, including weapons, their components, and ammunition. The lack of a robust central government in Sudan has also led to the widespread availability of small weaponry and munitions, which can easily find their way into Gondar city.

For Siyum (2021), insufficient border protection and control contribute to a conducive environment for the illegal trade of weapons in the border area. According to Bishku, (2022), Egypt and Ethiopia, both significant middle powers in Northeastern Africa, have a shared history of interactions and resource management. Nonetheless, the construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam and the disputes regarding water release present significant challenges. For Siraw (2023), the conflict over Nile water resources between Egypt and Ethiopia has intensified following the initiation of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam project. The securitization of water resources in Egypt, along with the continuing securitization efforts in Ethiopia, has intensified tensions and added complexity to the situation.

Sudan and Egypt especially, wants to destabilize Ethiopia for their national interest. They were supporting all opposition parties of Ethiopia both materially and financially. Thus, in one or another way, they are taking part in conflicts in Ethiopia. Therefore, there are many internal and external actors involved in the recurrent conflicts of Ethiopia (Siyum, 2021:21).

Here one can understand Sudan and Egypt are allegedly destabilizing Ethiopia to further their national interests. They provide both material and financial support to Ethiopian opposition parties. These actions play a direct role in the internal conflicts of Ethiopia. These actions suggest that multiple actors are involved in the recurring conflicts in Ethiopia, with Sudan and Egypt exerting significant external influence to weaken the country.

4.2.5. Bad Governance and Political Instability

The lack of security in the sub-Sahara and Great Lake regions poses a significant risk to democracy, stability, trade, and economic growth. Inadequate governance, political meddling, and corruption all contribute to the proliferation of weapons and hinder progress (Nganga, 2008). The data obtained from the city residents depicted that, this time seems the highest level of lawlessness. Residents in the city cannot stay outside of their home after 6:00 PM. The people do not trust the existing institutions to protect them from different problems. Politically, the situation in Gondar City is reflective of broader issues, where weak governance and corruption have created an environment conducive to criminal activities. The power of criminal gangs has become stronger than the power of the government. If this continues, I think the people may have a worse life in the future.

Likewise, human security threats emanate from weak state environments. Governance is seen as the key variable between the root causes of insecurity and their positive management (Large et al., 2006).

"Let me share a personal experience I had." The kidnapping of my hospital colleagues led to their families reporting the case to the nearby police station, citing the vehicle identification number (VIN) as evidence. The response given by the police officers was ridiculous. The police officers advised the families of the kidnapped individuals to negotiate with the kidnapers in order to secure their family members' release (KII-02-2024).

This indicates that the security measures are inadequate in safeguarding citizens against various security threats. Rather than pursuing the case or initiating an investigation, they recommended that the families engage in direct negotiations with the kidnappers. This underscores the weaknesses of law enforcement in executing their responsibilities and the insufficient assistance provided to crime victims, indicating potential issues of corruption, negligence, or ineffectiveness within the system. If government institutions are unable to achieve this, one could conclude that leadership has not succeeded.

Recently, I heard from the Gondar city administration police office that all bajajs (three-tier vehicles) operating in the city were required to remove their side curtains, and I personally witnessed this action. This declaration aims to reduce kidnapping crimes. The police office believed that the side curtain helped the bajaj drivers protect the kidnappers. However, this decision has led to the kidnapping of numerous individuals. The problem, therefore, stems from the government itself. Thus, the government, let alone finding solutions for the problems, becomes a problem maker. Criminals are working with police officers, militias, and other government security apparatuses (Interview with the city resident, 2024).

The aforementioned argument implies that the government not only exacerbates the situation, but also neglects the fundamental issues at hand. Furthermore, it is evident that the government is rife with pervasive corruption; allegations of collusion between criminals, police officers, militias, and multiple security personnel render the authorities complicit in the very crimes they are responsible for preventing.

4.2.6. The Culture of Small Arms

According Kenaw (2020), small arms serve a wide range of purposes within the Ethiopian communities. In many parts of the country, a person who owns arms is highly regarded and seen as a courageous individual. They may utilize their weapons to safeguard their livestock or property. Moreover, living in a conflict-prone environment, often overlooked, has significant psychological effects on individuals' mental well-being. Violence causes fear and trauma, which can deeply affect individuals and communities, leading to a breakdown of social cohesion and trust over time. In environments with human rights abuses, individuals seek small arms to protect themselves from state and non-state actors (Soysa et al., 2010). A vicious cycle is created where greater insecurity is led to by the proliferation of arms, and further demand for weapons is prompted as a means of self-defense. International organizations actively work to regulate the arms trade through initiatives like the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), which promotes responsible arms transfers and seeks to reduce the flow of small arms and light weapons into conflict zones (Garcia, 2014). On the other hand Guta, et al., (2024) argued that, there is a strong cultural tradition of owning firearms, which is seen as a source of pride and security in Amhara People and have different reasons for embracing gun ownership, highlighting the significant role that being armed plays in various societies.

Firearms are likened to the hearts of the people. It's lavishly kept, and used in major ceremonies like funerals, weddings, holidays, and important occasions. It's used to avenge the loss of life of loved ones, defend the owner from attacks and defend the boundary of the country in the face of attacks. All in all, it considered as a member of the household or it the favored than child (Guta, et al, 2024:9).

As the data obtained from key interview (KII -02-2024) depicted that, the proliferation of small arms in Gondar City is not merely a consequence of their physical availability but also a result of their misuse. In the Amhara region, small arms have historically served legitimate functions in rural areas, primarily for the protection of property and livestock. However, this rationale does not apply to their use in urban environments such as Gondar City. The improper utilization of these weapons in the city underscores a notable trend, where small arms are progressively perceived as instruments for criminal endeavors instead of for protecting oneself and defense. Families in these rural communities are active in educating their children about firearm safety, emphasizing the importance of protecting their homes, livestock, and even expressing their emotions. The cultural practices in these areas contribute to a low occurrence of conflicts and criminal activities, even though there is a

high rate of small arms possession. This is due to the fact that the careful regulation of their usage through long-standing traditions and communal education. In Contrast, the situation in Gondar City differs markedly. The issue is not the presence of small arms rather the use for criminal activities. Whether firearms are legally owned or not appears to be secondary; the intent behind their usage is what drives gun violence in the city.

4.3. Management of Proliferation of Small Arms

Unregulated accumulation of small arms poses a significant threat to personal freedoms and property rights, resulting in the displacement of individuals and putting socio-economic stability at risk. Small arms that threaten human security, including ethnic conflict, religious crises, cross-border banditry, kidnapping, armed robbery, and insurgencies (Olamide, et al., 2018).

Ethiopia has signed and ratified several international and regional treaties, including the UN Arm Trade Treaty, the SDGs target aim, and the Nairobi Protocol. It has incorporated these agreements into its national legislation, including Article 481 of the 2004 Criminal Code, which criminalizes arms trafficking. This includes fines and imprisonment for anyone who import, export, receive, store, or traffic firearms without proper authorization. Furthermore, articles 808 and 809 punish individuals for breaking the law, selling or transporting weapons to unauthorized persons, and carrying illegal weapons in public places (Kenaw, 2020). Ethiopia has committed to the Nairobi Protocol for Prevention, Control, and Reduction of Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa (Nairobi Protocol). This agreement mandates the disposal of both consigned and unlicensed small arms and light weapons (SALWs). Between 2003 and 2004, Ethiopia arrested 9,531 people for illegal arms transfers and possession, and destroyed over 11 700 small arms, 3,000 hand grenades, and 170,000 rounds of ammunition in 2006 and 2007 (Maru, 2008).

The Ethiopian Federal Police (EFPC) is collaborating with regional authorities to combat illicit arms trafficking. However, the current arrangement is not effective due to limited coordination, weak information gathering, and operational solidness (Metekia, 2022: NP).

According to Nega (2021), in Amhara Regional state, the responsibility for regulating the circulation of illicit small arms falls to police, militia, peace and security forces, and various justice institutions. Countries that implement laws effectively and maintain a robust criminal justice system tend to experience lower rates of intentional homicide. The rule of law plays a vital role in safeguarding against unlawful activities and criminal behavior; a decline in the strength of law enforcement agencies correlates with an uptick in crime rates. As the data obtained from the key informants (KII-01, 2024) indicates that efforts have been made by regional, and local administration address the issue to control the proliferation of small arms and its consequences and still a need for more comprehensive legislation.

In line with this, Aemro (2017) argues that, Ethiopia's firearms legislation is not adequately consolidated, despite its adoption of regional and international conventions. Likewise Kenaw (2020), argues that Ethiopia has enacted international and regional accords aimed at addressing the issue of firearms trafficking, notably including the Nairobi Protocol. Nevertheless, the nation is deficient in thorough firearms regulation.

Many countries have more weapons than we have. But they don't have the same problem as we do have because they have a strong legal framework and they implement it properly. When we comes to Ethiopia, laws are being issued based on the political will of the government bodies, not based on the people's needs, problems and lasting solutions. The government bodies can abrogate the rules and regulations they made whenever they like. Most of the rules we don't know when they are passed, we rather know when they are repealed. Therefore, there is no public participation in the process of enacting, implementing and amending the rules and regulations (KII, 02, 2024).

Through all of this, it is pointed out that Ethiopia's laws are motivated politically rather than based on public needs. The inclusion of the public in the decision-making process is absent, resulting in inefficient governance. Often political ambitions of government officials shape Ethiopian laws, rather than considering the needs of the people or concentrating on long-term solutions. Consequently, during the Northern Ethiopian war, the Ethiopian government announced a "operation for survival" to counter the TPLF invasion, asserting that all citizens should engage in the conflict and that individuals who obtained weapons during the battle were entitled to retain

them. This governmental proclamation fostered a climate conducive to the growth of small arms in the region. In contrast to nations with strong legal frameworks, Ethiopia's laws are susceptible to capricious alterations, resulting in instability and insecurity. The legal structure is not founded on enduring societal demands but rather on ephemeral political goals alone (KII-02-2024).

According to Nega (2021), the desire for small arms can be driven by a number of variables these include governance problem, weak security sectors, community distrust, human rights violations, and restricted civilian participation in decision-making processes. Weak security sectors are the primary cause of rising armed violence and organized crime. In this regard, according to the key informants (KII-01, 2024), there is no information and monitoring system, and the people who are assigned to do are involved in crimes. It is difficult to come up with a solution because they are the beneficiaries of crimes.

As the data obtained from interview with the city residents (2024), indicated that firearms were previously exclusively allowed, registered, and utilized for specific purposes. Lately, it seems that all young men are now equipped. Thefts, killings, gun violence and other crimes are unfortunately quite common. The impact is challenging to discern as it encompasses various dimensions and has detrimental effects in numerous ways. The current approach to handling illegal firearms in the region and in the city is ineffective. When individuals are caught with illegal weapons, they typically face minimal consequences, such as having their weapon confiscated and being released by the security. This lenient response allows offenders to continue engaging in even more complex illegal activities. As a result, the problem has escalated, causing significant harm to the city and driving residents away.

The main cause of the increase in arms trafficking is the lack of a stringent legal framework for firearms, exacerbated by the failure to implement current legislation. The efforts of the city administration and other government offices to control small arms are either extremely weak or completely non-existent. The ongoing civil war in the country is rendering these concerned institutions useless. Not only can they control the small arms trade, but they are also in a position to defend themselves (Interview with the city resident, 2024).

According to the key informants (KII-01, 2024) shows that, in the current situation, if a person is found with an illegal firearm, at most, the weapon will be taken from him and he will be released on bail. Then that person re-evaluate himself and comes up with more complex illegal act. Because of this, the problem has seriously affected the city and the effluents are leaving the city. Therefore, the solution to this problem is to gather information from the public in the form of research and prepare a strong legal framework to face the problem together with the public. The people of the city should be participated in the enforcement of rules and regulations.

As the data obtained from key informants (KII_02, 2024) depicted that, the regulation and tracking of small arms in the city are inadequate, leading to critical issues. Key concerns include the lack of clarity regarding the number of weapons, owner identities, and the consequences for failing to register arms. The absence of consistent enforcement and standardized procedures worsens the situation. One of the city residents elaborated that in the past, government institutions and societal values played a significant role in addressing such issues. However, currently because of bad governance and political instability these mechanisms have weakened, losing societal trust and effectiveness. The breakdown of both institutional oversight and social cohesion has left a regulatory gap, allowing illegal weapons to proliferate. Without restoring effective government structures and rebuilding trust in societal norms, efforts to control illegal arms will remain unsuccessful. So, the possible options are that the people shall organize by themselves to defend from different problems.

4.4. Key Findings

The research findings reveal that the proliferation of small arms significantly contributes to human insecurity, leading to numerous deaths, forced displacements, and economic crises. The proliferation of small arms in Gondar City has led to a sharp rise in crimes such as kidnapping, robbery, and killing, with illegal firearms being the primary tool. The early closure of businesses, internal displacement of people, and the cessation of tourist activities have severely affected the economy. Political instability and armed conflict in Northern Ethiopia post-2020 worsened the situation.

Several key factors have contributed to the proliferation of small arms in Ethiopia, particularly in Gondar city. The dissolution of the Amhara Special Forces, the conflict in Northern Ethiopia in 2020, and Gondar's geographical proximity to Sudan and Eritrea all contribute to the proliferation of small arms in the region. Additionally, the ongoing political instability in the region has further exacerbated the proliferation of small arms. An increase in violent crimes such as killings and kidnappings has led to insecurity and psychological distress among the residents of the city. The findings reveal that some of the government security forces, including police and militias, have engaged in arms trafficking and kidnapping activities.

The ability to live without constant threats of violence or harm, is an important part of human security, was highlighted by the important role of "freedom from fear." Large social consequences resulting from fear were concentrated on by the erosion of trust, which was worsened by the involvement of neighbors, relatives, and drivers in criminal acts such as kidnapping. The damaging effect of active threats on economic activities, and opportunities, limiting individuals to a cycle of poverty, and insecurity is highlighted by this economic downturn driven by fear. The disruption to both personal and professional lives, with medical professionals being kidnapped, and relocating to Addis Ababa, illustrates fear as a force that drives skilled workers away, consequently weakening the overall social, and economic framework of the city.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

The proliferation of small arms deeply affects the jeopardization of human security. Intensification of violence fueling of conflicts, and exacerbation of criminal activities result in grave humanitarian economic, and psychological issues. Fatality rates are significantly intensified by the presence of small arms. Crimes like kidnapping robbery and murder have been sophisticatedly linked with the prevalence of small arms, especially after the 2020 conflict in Northern Ethiopia. The economic landscape of the city has been importantly declined by insecurity, characterized by early business closures. A pervasive sense of fear and insecurity has been created by this surge in violence, disrupting daily life weakening economic activities, and leading to the displacement of city residents.

Public safety has greatly diminished due to the excessive use of these weapons, leading to increased crime, and instability. A significant increase in organized crime including robbery murder, kidnapping, and gun violence, has resulted from this proliferation. A wide-ranging apprehension has been caused by these small arms, which has risked human development, and safety, particularly affecting vulnerable segments of society, like children and women.

The spread of small arms in Ethiopia, due to lack of a stringent legal framework for firearms is the main cause of increased arms trafficking worsened by the failure to implement existing laws. The escalation of insecurity and criminal activity is contributed to by a lack of effective leadership, public involvement, and a strong justice system, which results in the proliferation of illegal weapons. In spite of adopting regional and international conventions adequate firearms legislation is lacking in Ethiopia, and inefficient governance due to poor public participation, and vulnerability to unpredictable changes is caused by it. Illegal firearms regulation failure, exacerbated by institutional fragility, and political instability, has led to a rise in crime, and the deterioration of public safety.

Recommendations

Based on the finding of the research the following recommendations are made,

Engage in Dialogue: initiating peace building measures within the region may help to address the root causes of small arms proliferation, which has worsened due to political instability. Both federal and local governments can support dialogue and mediation among conflicting parties, and they can help promote stability in the region as well as in the city.

Strengthen law enforcement against arms trafficking: Developing a strong legal framework that prioritizes the needs of the people very is crucial. Kidnapping and other crimes are increasing due to the proliferation of illegal weapons in the region. To combat arms trafficking, impose stricter and harsher penalties on government security forces who engage in this illicit arms trade. Independent monitoring bodies can deter such activities while showing the government's commitment to reducing small arms proliferation.

Strengthen border security: To reduce the smuggling of small arms in the region, both the federal and regional authorities should improve border controls and surveillance and collaborate with neighboring countries on security measures can help reduce arms trafficking.

Community policing: Community policing programs improve relationships between security forces and residents, and they encourage cooperation in reporting arms trafficking and related crimes. To reduce their involvement in illegal activities, police and militia require training and oversight.

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Appendix

First of all, thank you very much for giving your precious time for this interview! My name is Dejen Abera Tsegaye. Currently (2023-2024), I am an MA student at Erasmus University Rotterdam at the International Institute of Social Studies (ISS) Major Human Rights, Gender, and Conflict Studies (Social Justice Perspectives (SJP)). I am conducting research with the title “**The Impact of Proliferation of Small Arms on Human Security in Amhara Regional State, Ethiopia: The Case of Gondar City.**” The main purpose of this study is to explore the impact of small arms on human security. However, I would appreciate your participation in this interview to assist the researcher in searching out the existing impacts of small arms on human security in the study area. Therefore, I want to assure you that the study will solely utilize and maintain the confidentiality of the answers you provide. The quality and success of this study depend on your genuine information; please take your time to fully think about your answers for the interview.

Interviewee's Name:

Thanks again for your cooperation!

Questions

1. What are the negative effects or impacts of small arms on human security in Gondar city? Can you explain them?
2. What potential causes of behind the widespread use of small guns in the city?
3. How does the law and control of the regional and local administration address the issue of preventing the proliferation of small arms and its consequences? What actions do you believe should be taken in the future?

Appendix

List of interviews

No	Code of interview	Sex	Place of interview	Date of interview	Remark
1.	KII -01	M	Maraki	24 July 2024	
2.	KII-02	M	Auto park	28 July 2024	
3.	Interview 01	M	Maraki	25 July 2024	
4.	Interview 02	F	College	5 August 2024	
5.	Interview 03	M	Piassa	25 July 2024	

ISS Research Ethics Review Form for RP research carried out by MA students¹

Aim:

This Form aims to help you identify research ethics issues which may come up in the design and delivery of your Research Paper (RP). It builds on the session on Research Ethics session in course 3105 and subsequent discussions with your peers and RP supervisor/reader. We hope the form encourages you to reflect on the ethics issues which may arise.

The process:

The Ethics Review process consists of answering questions in the following two checklists: B1-Low-sensitivity and B2-High-sensitivity. Depending on the answer to these questions you might need to fill section **C-Statement of Research Ethics** too.

The background document "ISS Research Ethics Guidelines for MA Students" provides advice and detailed information on how to complete this form.

Step 1 - Fill checklists B1 and B2

Step 2 - After answering checklists B1 and B2, the process proceeds as follows:

- **If you answer 'yes' to one or more low-sensitivity questions (checklist B1):** please discuss the issues raised with your supervisor and include an overview of the risks, and actions you can take to mitigate them, in the final design of your RP. You can refer to the ISS Research Ethics Guidelines for MA Students for help with this.
- **If you answer 'yes' to one or more high-sensitivity questions (checklist B2),** please complete section 'C' of the form below describing the risks you have identified and how you plan to mitigate against them. Discuss the material with your supervisor, in most cases the supervisor will provide approval for you to go ahead with your research and attach this form to the RP design when you upload it in canvas. If, after consultation with your supervisor, it is felt that additional reflection is needed, please submit this form (sections B1, B2, and C) to the Research Ethics Committee (REC) for review as follows:

When submitting your form to the REC, please send the following to researchethics@iss.nl:

- 1) the completed checklists B1 and B2 (or equivalent if dealing with an external ethics requirement)
- 2) the completed form C 'Statement of Research Ethics'
- 3) a copy of the RP design
- 4) any accompanying documentation, for example, consent forms, Data Management Plans (DMP), ethics clearances from other institutions.

Your application will be reviewed by a reviewer who is not part of your supervisory team. The REC aims to respond to ethics approval requests within a period of 15 working days.

Step 3 - Integrating the Ethics Review process into the RP:

- This Ethics Review Form needs to be added as an annex in your final RP Design document to be uploaded in the Canvas page for course 3105.

¹ This checklist and statement is adapted from the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) Research Ethics Committee and informed by the checklists of two Ethics Review Boards at EUR (ESHCC and ERIM) and the [EU H2020 Guidance – How to complete your ethics self-assessment](#).

ISS Research Ethics Review Form - MA Research

Project details, Checklists, and Approval Status

A) Project/Proposal details

1. Project/Proposal Title	THE IMPACT OF PROLIFERATION OF SMALL ARMS ON HUMAN SECURITY IN AMHARA REGIONAL STATE, ETHIOPIA: THE CASE OF GONDAR CITY
2. Name of MA student (applicant)	Dejen Abera Tsegaye
3. Email address of MA student	677251dt@eur.nl
4. Name of Supervisor	Dr. Kees Biekart
5. Email address of Supervisor	biekart@iss.nl
6. Country/countries where research will take place	Ethiopia, Gondar
7. Short description of the proposed research and the context in which it is carried out:	
<p>The purpose of this research is to investigate multifaceted Impact of proliferation of small arms on human security in Amhara Regional State, Ethiopia: The Case of Gondar City. This research will be carried out by using both primary and secondary sources. The primary source will be collected through interview and secondary source will be gathered using document review from government office in the study area mainly police reports.</p>	

B) Research checklist

The following checklist acts as a guide to help you think through what areas of research ethics you may need to address. For explanations and guidance please refer to the background document 'ISS Research Ethics Guidelines for MA students'. Please complete both sections (B1 and B2)

	Please tick the appropriate box	YES	NO
B1: LOW-SENSITIVITY			
1. Does the research involve the collection and or processing of (primary or secondary) personal data (including personal data in the public domain)?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Does the research involve participants from whom voluntary informed consent needs to be sought?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Will financial or material incentives (other than reasonable expenses and compensation for time) be offered to participants?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4. Will the research require the co-operation of a gatekeeper for access to the groups, communities or individuals to be recruited (e.g., administrator for a private Facebook group, manager of an institutions, government official)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
5. Does the research include benefit-sharing measures for research which takes place with people who could be considered vulnerable? – please revise the background document (Guidelines) for more information.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

If you have ticked 'yes' to any of the above boxes (1-5), please discuss with your supervisor and include more information in your RP design describing the issue raised and how you propose to deal with it during your research.

ISS Research Ethics Review Form - MA Research

B2: HIGH SENSITIVITY		YES	NO
6.	Does the research involve the collection or processing of sensitive (primary or secondary) personal data? (e.g. regarding racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, biometric data, data related to health or a person's sex life or sexual orientation)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
7.	Does the research involve participants for whom voluntary and informed consent may require special attention or who can be considered 'vulnerable'? (e.g., children (under 18), people with learning disabilities, undocumented migrants, patients, prisoners)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
8.	Will it be necessary for participants to take part in the research without their knowledge and consent (covert observation of people in non-public places)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
9.	Will the research be conducted in healthcare institutions, in healthcare settings, or will it involve the recruitment or study of patients or healthcare personnel?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
10.	Could the research induce psychological stress or anxiety or cause harm or negative consequences for research participants, researchers, or persons and institutions connected to them?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
11.	Could the situation in one or several of the countries where research is carried out put the researcher, individuals taking part in the research, or individuals connected to the researcher, at risk? Presence of an infectious disease such as COVID-19 is considered a risk – please provide information as outlined in the background document (Guidelines).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
12.	Does the research require ethical approval or research permission from a local institution or body?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

If you have ticked 'Yes' to one of the above (5-11), please complete section 'C' below describing how you propose to mitigate the risks you have identified. After discussion with your supervisor, please submit the form to the Research Ethics Committee. In addition, if you have ticked 'Yes' to a question on any kind of personal data, please also complete the privacy questionnaire.

ISS Research Ethics Review Form - MA Research

YOU ONLY NEED TO COMPLETE THIS SECTION IF YOU HAVE ANSWERED YES TO ONE OF THE QUESTIONS IN SECTION B2 ABOVE (Questions 5-11)


C) Statement of Research Ethics

Using the background document 'ISS Research Ethics Guidelines for MA students', please address how you are going to deal with the ethics concern identified, including prevention measure to avoid them from manifesting, mitigation strategies to reduce their impact, and preparedness and contingency planning if the risks manifest.

Please number each point to correspond with the relevant checklist question above. Expand this section as needed and add any additional documentation which might not be included in your RP design, such as consent forms.

[TO BE COMPLETED BY MA STUDENT AND DISCUSSED WITH THE SUPERVISOR. IF THE SUPERVISOR FINDS IT NECESSARY TO SEEK FURTHER REVIEW, THE STUDENT MUST SUBMIT THE FORM TO THE RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE]

The researcher will keep the confidentiality of the key informants about the information they have shared. Furthermore, the utmost importance will be placed on ensuring their privacy, safety, and consent. Furthermore, during the interview, participants will be informed that they could freely respond to questions and they have the right to stop responding if they felt uncomfortable.

Supervisor signature

12/11/24

D) Approval from Research Ethics Committee

*To be completed by the Research Ethics Committee only if

Approved by Research Ethics Committee: _____ Date: _____

Additional comments for consideration from Research Ethics Committee:

If the REC needs more information before approving, the REC secretary will be in touch with the MA student. If after requesting more information the REC still has concerns, the REC secretary will ask the supervisor to discuss these with the student. In the unlikely event that there is still no resolution, the REC will refer the application to the Institute Board.